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FACT SHEET

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Branchwide Strategic Planning for California's Judicial Branch: An Overview

For over a decade, the Judicial Council of California has collaborated with justice system partners in long-range strategic planning for California's judicial branch. The council adopted its first branchwide strategic plan in 1992; an inaugural branchwide operational plan followed in 2000. The strategic and operational plans provide a mission and direction for the state's judicial branch. An overview of the broadly inclusive branchwide strategic planning process follows.

The Strategic Planning Cycle

The branchwide *strategic plan* is developed by the Judicial Council in collaboration with justice system partners every six years (next plan to cover fiscal years 2006–2012).

The branchwide *operational plan* is developed by the council in collaboration with justice system partners every three years (next plan to cover fiscal years 2007–2010).

Strategic Planning Inputs: Stakeholder Participation in Planning
Input on branchwide issues, needs, and priorities is obtained on an ongoing basis from the following stakeholders and justice system partners:

- The public via surveys and focus groups such as the Judicial Council's Trust and Confidence in the California Courts Assessment, phases I and II (2005 and 2006)
- The trial courts via their community-focused strategic and operational plans posted on the branch's password-protected Serranus Trial Court Planning Web site;
- The Judicial Council's advisory committees and task forces via their annual work plans, which link projects undertaken to branchwide strategic goals and objectives;

- The State Bar of California via direct participation in Judicial Council-sponsored branchwide planning activities;
- Administrative Office of the Courts via direct participation in Judicial Council-sponsored branchwide planning activities; and
- Other justice system experts who contribute data on emerging state and national trends in justice practice and administration.

Strategic Planning Outputs

Data obtained from stakeholders and justice system partners informs and shapes the following strategic planning outputs:

Six-Year Strategic Plan for California's Judicial Branch

- **Mission Statement:** Defines the organization's purpose and fundamental reason for existing.
- **Strategic Goals:** Ambitious "ends" statements to be achieved in specific areas of need.
- **Policy Direction Statements:** Articulate the broad approaches to be pursued in realizing each strategic goal.

Three-Year Operational Plan for California's Judicial Branch

- **Objectives:** Shorter-term, specific ends/projections of what is to be accomplished for each strategic goal.
- **Desired Outcomes:** Specific, measurable outcomes for each objective—with a timeline for accomplishing.

Implementation and Accountability

California's justice system partners collaborate in implementing—and accounting for progress toward achieving—branchwide strategic and operational plan goals and objectives as follows:

- **The trial courts** each submit an annual progress report (APR) of planning on the branch's password-protected Serranus Trial Court Planning Web site. The APR provides an implementation update, as well as a priority status report, for each local and branchwide goal and objective.

- **Judicial Council advisory committees and task forces** report annually on the implementation status of projects and priorities included in their annual work plans. Implementation reports are reviewed by the council's Executive and Planning Committee or Rules and Projects Committee.
- **The State Bar of California** conducts its own strategic planning and implementation efforts, the priorities of which complement the strategic goals and objectives established for the judicial branch.
- **The Judicial Council and Administrative Office of the Courts** oversee and implement many projects that support the goals and objectives of the branchwide strategic and operational plans. Implementation status is tracked and reported as follows:
 - **Judicial Council of California's annual report.** The annual report summarizes the achievements of the California judicial branch as well as key trends in court workload and budget allocations for the fiscal year.
 - **Periodic reports by the Administrative Director to the Judicial Council.** Several times annually, the Administrative Director of the Courts updates the council on major branchwide strategic accomplishments. These reports are a regular feature of the council's issues and business meetings.
 - **AOC annual implementation report to the Judicial Council.** This report is generated from the AOC Projects Database and delivered for the council's review at its annual planning meeting. The AOC Projects Database tracks over 160 AOC projects. AOC staff record major project milestones in the database; these milestones denote progress made toward implementing the specific objectives and desired outcomes articulated in the branchwide strategic and operational plans.

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Additional resources:

Leading Justice Into the Future, Judicial Council of California Strategic Plan,
www.courtinfo.ca.gov/reference/documents/stplan2k.pdf; Leading Justice Into the
Future, Operational Plan for California's Judicial Branch, 2003–2006,
www.courtinfo.ca.gov/reference/documents/opplan2003.pdf